

1955

A Study of the Relationship of Certain Parental Attitudes and Personality Characteristics to the Reading Achievement of Children in the First Grade.

Verna Louise Vickery

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vickery, Verna Louise, "A Study of the Relationship of Certain Parental Attitudes and Personality Characteristics to the Reading Achievement of Children in the First Grade." (1955). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 8143.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/8143

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF CERTAIN PARENTAL
ATTITUDES AND PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS TO THE READING
ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE FIRST GRADE

22

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Verna L. Vickery
August 1954

UMI Number: DP69521

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI DP69521

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

MANUSCRIPT THESES

Unpublished theses submitted for the master's and doctor's degrees and deposited in the Louisiana State University Library are available for inspection. Use of any thesis is limited by the rights of the author. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may not be copied unless the author has given permission. Credit must be given in subsequent written or published work.

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its clientele is expected to make sure that the borrower is aware of the above restrictions.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer is deeply indebted to Professor M. S. Robertson, who guided this study in every stage of its progress. The writer also acknowledges her indebtedness to Dr. Henry D. Shanklin for his painstaking criticism of the treatment of the data and to Dr. Edward B. Robert, Dr. Benjamin F. Mitchell, Dr. W. Rodney Cline, and Dr. George H. Deer for their interest and suggestions in the organization of the study.

For their intelligent and considerate cooperation in the collection of the data for this study, the writer wishes to express her appreciation to Mr. R. W. Magee, Superintendent of the Washington Parish (Louisiana) Schools, to Mr. H. R. Sylvest, Supervisor of Instruction, to Mr. H. E. Foil, Visiting Teacher, and to the first grade teachers of Washington Parish.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
ABSTRACT	viii
 CHAPTER	
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED	1
The problem	2
Definition of terms used	5
The population	8
Organisation of the thesis	8
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
III. TESTS, GROUPS, AND PROCEDURES USED IN THIS STUDY	24
Description of procedures used in securing	
participants for the study	24
Description of parent group	25
Description of the children included in	
this study	28
Instruments used in the study	31
Treatment of the data	37
IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	38
Analysis of the data obtained on the	
Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions	39
Analysis of the data obtained on the	
Derogreuter Personality Inventory	51

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	66
Review of the findings	68
Implications of the study	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY	74
AUTOBIOGRAPHY	78

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Educational Status of the Selected 146 Parents of Children in the First Grade Presented Accord- ing to the Reading Achievement of their Children and the Number of Parents Attaining Each Educational Level	27
II. Range and Mean Reading Grade Level in Terms of Upper, Middle, and Lower Achievement Groups of 102 Children Represented in the Study by Their Mothers	30
III. Range and Mean Reading Grade Level in Terms of Upper, Middle, and Lower Achievement Groups of 44 Children Represented in the Study by Both Parents	30
IV. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Total Group of 146 Parents and Various Sub-Groups on the Minnesota Parents' Opinion Scale	40
V. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Total Group of 146 Parents and Various Sub-Groups on the Minnesota Parents' Opinion Scale, Part A	42
VI. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Total Group of 146 Parents and Various Sub-Groups on the Minnesota Parents' Opinion Scale, Part B	44

TABLE	PAGE
VII. Correlations Obtained Between the Parents' Ranks on Part A and on Part B of the MSPO and Their Children's Ranks on the Gates Primary Reading Tests	47
VIII. Percentages of Children in the Successful and Unsuccessful Reading Groups Whose Parents Were Classified on Parts A and B of the MSPO in Each of the Patterns Indicated	50
IX. Means, Comparable Percentile Rank, and Standard Deviations of the Various Parent Sub-Groups on the D4-D Scale (Dominance-Submission) of the Personality Inventory	53
X. Means, Comparable Percentile Ranks, and Standard Deviations of the Various Parent Sub-Groups on the F1-C Scale (Self-Confidence) of the Personality Inventory	55
XI. Means, Comparable Percentile Ranks, and Standard Deviations of the Various Parent Sub-Groups on the F2-S Scale (Self-Confidence) of the Personality Inventory	57
XII. Correlations Obtained Between the Parents' Ranks on the D4-D, F1-C, and F2-S Scales of the Personality Inventory and Their Children's Rank on the Gates Primary Reading Tests	59

TABLE	PAGE
XIII. Number of Successful Readers and Unsuccessful Readers in Each Classification of Mother-Father Combinations on the F1-C Scale of the Personality Inventory	62
XIV. Number of Successful Readers and Unsuccessful Readers in Each Classification of Mother-Father Combinations on the B4-D Scale of the Personality Inventory	63
XV. Number of Successful Readers and Unsuccessful Readers in Each Classification of Mother-Father Combinations on the F2-S Scale of the Personality Inventory	64

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to study the relationships that exist between the reading achievement of children in the first grades of the Washington Parish (Louisiana) schools and certain attitudes and personality characteristics of their parents.

One hundred two children were included in the study. Forty-four of these children were represented by both their parents and fifty-eight were represented by their mothers only. The reading achievement of the children was measured at the beginning of the eighth month of school by means of the Gates Primary Reading Tests. The children were classified into Upper, Middle, and Lower Groups on the basis of their rank within the entire group of children included in the study. The Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions and the Bernreuter Personality Inventory were administered to the parents of these children.

In the treatment of the data, the following differences between the scores of parents of successful readers and those of the parents of unsuccessful readers were found to be statistically significant differences:

- (1) The opinion that children should be given freedom of choice and responsibility for their own behavior was expressed more frequently by both the mothers and the fathers of Upper Group children than by the mothers and the fathers of Lower Group children.

- (2) The mothers of the children in the Upper Group were

more inclined to express the opinion that children should be active in their social relationships than were the mothers of Lower Group children.

- (3) The fathers of children who achieved above the mean score of the group in reading tended to be more dominant in their face-to-face relationships and more self-confident than were the fathers of children who achieved below the mean score of the group in reading.

The reading achievement scores of boys were shown to be positively related to (1) their mothers' opinions concerning freedom of choice to be given to children ($\rho = +.48$); (2) their mothers' opinions concerning the degree of activity to be expected of children in social areas ($\rho = +.44$); (3) their fathers' opinions concerning freedom of choice to be given to children ($\rho = +.49$); (4) their fathers' tendency toward dominance in face-to-face relationships ($\rho = +.56$); and (5) their fathers' and their mothers' self-confidence.

The degree of relationship found between either parent's score on these variables and the reading achievement of girls was low, the highest correlation being a negative one between fathers' scores indicating a lack of self-confidence and their daughters' reading achievement ($\rho = -.42$).

The findings of this study point to the need for further investigation of these variables in relationship to the reading achievement of boys in the first grade. Such a study might include boys of different age and grade levels and might be concerned with the

dynamics of the mother-father-son relationship.

It is suggested that parent-study groups be an integral part of the reading program. The Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions was found to be an effective instrument for use in these groups.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

In the past fifty years of American education literally thousands of studies have been made concerning the nature of reading and the causes of reading disabilities, indicating the tremendous concerns felt by educators in this vital area of the school's program. In more recent years, and with the development of more highly sensitized instruments in the psychological field, these studies have begun to deal with the dynamics of the home environment as a possible factor in reading failure.

Reading is a dynamic interaction between the individual who reads and the symbols on a printed page. The individual brings to the reading all that he is or that he perceives himself to be. Thus, the nature of the reading process is most often analyzed in terms of the perceptual and conceptual factors involved.

To be able to read, the child must be able to perceive the symbols and to translate them into meaningful language patterns based upon his experiential background. Perception itself is an involved process, including not only the child's visual or auditory recognition of the symbol but his emotional and mental state as well. Certain qualities of perception are significant in the reading process. What the individual perceives will be in terms of his own organization of the total field. Teachers of reading recognize this organizational quality of perception when they teach configurational and contextual clues as a means of word analysis. The individual is selective in what he perceives. This

selectivity will be based on his past experience with the object, as well as on his need to perceive.

The ability to read must be recognized as a quality in itself-- a behavior that the child exhibits, or refuses to exhibit, according to his perceptions as to how the act of reading will enter into his personality organization. Learning to read requires a certain amount of aggression, of desire to achieve for one's self, of desire to become independent. The act itself may take on significance as a means of proving one's own worthwhileness. It is important in the analysis of reading difficulty that this aspect of what the act of "becoming a reader" may mean to the child in his inter-personal relationship be recognized.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study to ascertain, insofar as possible through the use of group-testing techniques, whether any relationships exist between certain affective factors in the home environment and the child's achievement in reading in the first grade. The specific questions posed by the investigator were:

1. Is there any relationship between the child's achievement in reading in the first grade and
 - a. the mother's attitude toward the degree of responsibility or freedom of choice to be given to children?
 - b. the father's attitude toward the degree of responsibility

- or freedom of choice to be given to children?
- c. the mother's attitude toward aspirations held for children?
 - d. the father's attitude toward aspirations held for children?
2. Are there any significant differences between characteristics of personality expressed by mothers of successful readers and those expressed by mothers of unsuccessful readers?
 3. Are there any significant differences between characteristics of personality expressed by fathers of successful readers and those expressed by fathers of unsuccessful readers?
 4. Are there any significant differences between mother-father combinations in the attitudes and characteristics measured between parents of successful readers and parents of unsuccessful readers?

In proceeding with this investigation, it was necessary to assume that the parents' role in the establishment of the atmosphere of the home is a key one, and that the roles the parents play are dependent, to a large extent, on the personality structures of these parents and their attitudes toward child rearing. It was recognized that home atmosphere, at best an elusive term at present, is the result of the interaction between the people who constitute the family constellation and the economic and social conditions within the home setting. When the child comes into this setting, there are certain fairly stabilized factors already present. Key among these are the parents' personality and attitudes.

Thus, the assumption that a study of the parents themselves would afford insight into the home situation seemed justified.

This investigation was undertaken in the nature of an exploratory study based on the hypothesis that the attitudes and personality patterns of parents do constitute an effective factor in the child's total life-space which either promotes or inhibits growth in learning to read.

Importance of the study. As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to explore new areas and to determine their significance in relation to reading ability. The need for such exploration is justified in terms of the continued school problem of understanding children in their total environment in an effort to facilitate their learning. Clinical studies of reading disability cases have consistently pointed out the need for further study of the home environment. Robinson, in her analysis of why children fail in reading, stated:

The analysis of relative frequency of various causal factors shows that more attention should be given to home and family problems of severely retarded readers. In the group of children considered, this cause operated more frequently than visual and emotional difficulties, both of which have received wider attention in diagnostic routines.... Furthermore, this finding is highly suggestive to school people. It is possible that a better understanding of children's home relationships might be an excellent means of preventing cases of reading disability.¹

¹Helen M. Robinson, Why Pupils Fail in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 236.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Reading achievement. There are as many definitions of reading achievement as there are problems to be investigated, because each definition, to be valid, must take into consideration the nature of the use to be made of that definition. In this study, it was necessary to keep in mind that the usual definitions which discriminate between successful and unsuccessful readers in terms of retardation and acceleration as compared with mental age would not be applicable as only children of the first grade would be included. Wide differences in reading achievement were not likely to appear within a reasonable sampling, particularly when it was desirable to keep such factors as intelligence, length of schooling, and teaching method as nearly constant as possible. Therefore, in this study the definition of a successful reader was any child who had no uncorrected physical defects which might be associated with reading disability, who had average, or above average intelligence, and who had achieved by the eighth month of school a score on a standardized reading test which placed him in the upper one-third of the total group in the study. The unsuccessful reader was defined as a similar child who had achieved on the same test a score which placed him in the lower one-third of the group. In the study, the successful readers will be designated as the Upper Group and the unsuccessful readers as the Lower Group.

Affective factors. "Feelings, emotions, and all attitudes with emotional components are factors which affect our interpretation of

life and consequently our behavior."² Throughout this study the term affective factor was used to connote these aspects of experience. The affective factors being studied are parental attitudes and personality patterns.

1. Attitude. "A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related."³ Using this basic definition, attitude, as used in this study, was defined operationally as the expressed reaction of the parent to certain specific written situations which were designed to yield a descriptive interpretation of that parent's "mental and neural state of readiness" which would influence his responses to specific situations involving the degree of responsibility to be given to children and expectations, or aspirations, held for children. This definition utilizes the data of immediate experience or the introspective approach to the determination of attitudes, accepting the assumption that a summation of relative scale positions on selected individual items will yield a total "attitude score" toward a

²Daniel A. Prescottt, Emotion and the Educative Process (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1938), p. 5.

³G. W. Allport, "Attitudes," Handbook of Social Psychology Carl Murchison, Editor (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1935), Chap. XVII, p. 810.

given subject.

2. Personality pattern. Theoretically, the definition of personality used in this study was formulated within the psychology of inter-personal relationships. Personality was viewed as an "hierarchial organization of psychical systems" with the self-system as the dominant system and the self-other system defined as the perception of self in relation to other selves.⁴ The ultimate aim of this investigation rests upon the concept that a child's learning to read (perception of and reaction to a given situation) may be affected by expressed attitudes and personality of his parents (other psychical selves that invade his own Self). (Since his reactions would be determined by his perception of the situation), the suggestion of a study of parental attitudes and personality in relationship to learning to read precludes a theory of personality based on (a) the development of the Self through empathic experiences with other Selves, and (b) a relationship between what perceptions and reactions a person is capable of making and his concept of Self.

Operationally, the definition of personality pattern used in this investigation is those expressed attitudes toward the Self and

⁴Robert R. Blake and Glenn Ramsey, Perception: An Approach to Personality (New York: The Ronald Press, 1951), Chap. VIII.

Self-other relationships as measured and categorized by the Bernreuter Personality Inventory.

III. THE POPULATION

Parents chosen for this study were those who had children in the first grade of the Washington Parish (Louisiana) School System in the 1953-54 session and who volunteered to participate in this study. There were 344 children in the first grades of the six schools used in this study. Two hundred of the approximately 700 parents contacted for the study responded to the request by the principals and teachers to participate. From the two hundred parents tested, 146 mothers and fathers were selected for inclusion in the study.

The schools of Washington Parish serve a rural and small urban population. The major occupations in the Parish are dairy farming and paper manufacturing. Many of the parents commute to Bogalusa, an urban center, where they are engaged largely in factory work. The rural schools included in the study were the consolidated schools located at Enon, Pine, Angie, Varnado, and Mount Hermon. The rural-urban school which participated was Franklinton Elementary School, located in a town of 2800 inhabitants. The study included parents of children from thirteen different classrooms.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The present chapter has been concerned with the presentation and delineation of the problem set forth in this thesis. The following chapter will consist of a review of the research that has been accomplished

pertinent to this problem. Chapter Three will set forth a detailed description of the population selected for the study together with an analysis of the instruments and procedures used in making the investigation. The fourth chapter will contain a presentation and interpretation of the data collected. The final chapter will present the conclusions to be drawn from the data, the implications for education, and a summary statement.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Changing socio-economic conditions and enforced compulsory attendance laws have placed the American schools in the position of teaching "all the children of all the people." The presence of "all the children," regardless of ability or background, has created problems that have challenged the best educational thinkers of the day. Coincident with this increasingly diversified enrollment have come advanced psychological studies in the area of child development that have advocated the promotion of these children through the grades at a rate commensurate with their chronological, social, and psychological development. In the primary grades, particularly, the ability to learn to read has long been the criterion for the promotion of children from grade to grade. While "social promotion" is acceptable and justifiable to many teachers, the problems created by the poor reader in the upper grades have been a constant source of concern to the elementary teacher. Out of these concerns has evolved the problem of provision for adequate educational growth if the child is to succeed in making adequate social and personal adjustments. The schools have become increasingly aware of the socio-psychological climate within which the reading process develops, and have, therefore, become sensitized to the sociological and psychological factors which may operate as causative elements in reading failure. Much of the recent research in reading has been directed toward an analysis of these factors in an

effort to understand the nature of reading disability and its prevention. In his summary of the research in the field of reading, Gray notes this trend in the literature:

It is highly significant that scientific methods are now being used widely to study reading problems that have their origin in the home, in the library, and in adult life in general, as well as in school and college.¹

The present study is designed to further research in one of these areas, that of the psychological climate of the child in the home as measured through a study of the parents' opinions and personality structures, and to note any relationship that may exist between these patterns and the child's ability to learn to read in the first grade.

Investigations into the causes of reading disability have led to the accepted view that reading disability is most often a result of a combination of factors. Robinson concludes her summary of reading investigations by quoting from Monroe and Backus:

Reading disabilities are usually the result of several contributing factors rather than one isolated cause. Studies of the causes of reading disabilities reveal no clear-cut factors which occur only in poor readers but never in good readers. Some children who possess the impeding factors appear to be able to read in spite of them...a few good readers are found who have poor vision, poor hearing, emotional instability, who come from environment detrimental to reading and who have had inferior teaching....We may conclude that in most cases one factor alone is not sufficient to inhibit the act of reading, if compensating abilities are present, and if the child's reaction to the difficulty is a favorable one.²

¹William S. Gray, "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (Walter S. Monroe, Editor, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), p. 966.

² Helen Robinson, Why Pupils Fail in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 101.

Utilizing the longitudinal multi-dimensional approach to child study through cases from the records of the University of Michigan's Laboratory School, Beck found that three factors were always present in the fast readers in her study: superior intelligence, frequently bordering on the genius rating, a fast growth pattern, and emotional stability. This investigation was designed to determine whether the emotional maladjustments found in slow readers are another symptom of slow growth of the child as a whole. However, having shown a relationship between total growth patterns and reading ability, she concluded that "neither intelligence nor growth will explain some cases of slow reading, which apparently is a multiple function of not only growth and intelligence but of emotional security as well."³

Accepting this view as to the basic nature of the causes of reading disability, the research worker who approaches the study of an isolated factor must evaluate his results in terms of their furtherance of an understanding of the total constellation of causative factors.

Two areas of research have particular bearing on the present investigation. The significant findings in the field of personality development and reading are of concern here as the nature of the personality difficulties often tends to reflect factors in the psychological climate of the home.

³Harriet K. Beck, "Relationship of Emotional Factors in Early Childhood to Subsequent Growth and To Achievement in Reading," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950), p. 177.

The relationship of reading ability to personality development has been a subject of research since the early 1920's. Knight has stated that these investigations are based on the general hypothesis that "desirable personality characteristics and effective reading development are inter-related and inter-dependent."⁴

The early exploratory studies in this area were attempts to identify the personality characteristics of children recognized as reading disability cases. Typical of these studies is that of Hincks⁵ who found that the reading disability cases she studied displayed a variety of symptoms of deep-seated anxieties, among them speech hesitation, nightmares, and anxiety about health. She frequently found rudeness, willfulness, boastfulness, high fatigability, tantrums and related symptoms of disturbance among these children.

These studies showing a relationship between certain personality characteristics and reading ability led some workers to advance theories concerning the basic emotional causes of reading disability and to design experiments based on these theories. Graham, examining case histories, interview records, and objective psychological data of 122 unsuccessful readers, felt that his investigations "tended to confirm the unsuccessful reader as a child characterized by repressions and resistance." Graham described the nature of reading disability as

⁴Elva E. Knight, "Personality Development Through Reading," The Reading Teacher, 7:22, October, 1953.

⁵E. M. Hincks, Disability in Reading and Its Relation to Personality. (Harvard Monographs in Education, No. 7. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

follows:

The writer conceived of conversion hysteria as an extreme of continuum of adjustive mechanisms which involve repression, continuance of earlier rewarding behavior, and resistance....It was argued that the converting of emotional problems into behavior and somatic disorders was pathological only when it reached a certain undefined extreme. It was further maintained that reading, because it is a function that cannot be observed, was admirably constructed for passive resistance to an order which the Unsuccessful Reader dares not consciously oppose; and that the UR has repressed his wishes to revolt against order and remain small and innocuous while gratifying them by being unable to assume the adult reading role.⁶

On the other hand, Kunst sees reading, "...not as a passive inability to learn, but as an active, though unconscious, protection against learning to read. She has come to believe that this resistance stems from anxiety.⁷

Kunst has further clarified and specified her views concerning this anxiety to propose that disturbances in reading are disturbances of the exploratory function. She recognized several refinements of curiosity disturbance: the child may fear that his curiosity will bring punishment to himself or danger to others. Further, curiosity may be deadened because learning has been overdone. In the latter case, the child is overwhelmed by encyclopedic answers to his questions. Reading disability, then, is interpreted as merely symptomatic of a disturbance in the evolution of psycho-biological functions.

Siegel, in a recent study of the personality structures of

⁶Earl E. Graham, "An Exploration of a Theory of the Emotional Bases for Reading Failure," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1951), p. 68.

⁷Mary S. Kunst, "Psychological Treatment in Reading Disability," Clinical Studies in Reading, (Supplementary Education Monographs, University of Chicago Press, 1941), I, 133.

clinical cases who had reading problems as compared with clinical cases that showed other problems, came to the conclusion that reading cases could not be separated according to their Rorschach protocols from other problem cases. However, in his list of implications of the study he stated:

The protocols were characterized by disturbances of affect, instability, and fear reactions with the clinical group showing a more explosive, overt, and uncontrolled type of distress. The Reading Group tended to evidence deeply repressed and deeply rooted fears which were diffuse and menacing. Both groups showed a strong need for achievement, a need to impress the adults in their environment beyond their level of capability. This need to achieve, coupled with the inability to do so, seemed to be associated with the manifest feelings of anxiety and adequacy.⁸

...the Reading Group which seemed to be more prone to yield to these pressures indicated its resistance by failing to learn. In a culture where school progress and adjustment is a prime prestige factor, the Reading Group was exercising its most devastating weapon against the environment to which reaction was taking place.⁹

Although Siegel found that his reading problem cases presented no discrete personality pattern of their own, he did note that there was a significant difference in their manner of solving problems. This study suggests that the adaptive mechanism chosen by the child to help him meet his problems may be the result of parental attitudes and intra-family relationships; in one type of family situation the child may

⁸Max Siegel, "The Personality Structure of Children with Reading Disabilities as Compared with Children Presenting Other Clinical Problems," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1951), p. 163.

⁹Ibid., p. 164.

choose a different reaction from the one he would choose in a different type of family, although the basic pressures might be fairly identical. The implications of this study further suggests that the analysis of parental attitudes in relationship to reading ability will offer a profitable area for further investigation.

In summarizing these investigations into the relationship of personality structure to reading ability, it is possible to point out that there are certain behavioral differences that are more common to reading disability cases than to other clinical cases. Various workers have theorized that failure to read is a defence mechanism used by children to avoid their fears of accepting adult roles, a curiosity disturbance, or a resistive act to express covertly their rebellion against the pressures in their environment. These investigators would, obviously, accept the theory that the child's disability in reading is directly related to the type of adaptive mechanism he has learned. The consensus among research workers, however, seems to be that not all reading disability has an emotional basis; that is, while some workers have isolated personality syndromes more commonly present in reading disability cases, there is little positive evidence to indicate that these patterns necessarily precede the disability and may be labeled as direct causative factors. More recently, emphasis has been given to the study of the home environment as a factor that seems to be basically responsible for the development of the personality syndrome and the reading disability. Investigators have referred often to the need to study the child's home background, parental attitudes, and intra-familial

relationships as this third factor.

The second area of investigation basic to this study is the research that has dealt directly with the home environment as a factor in reading failure and has analyzed such tangible evidence as socio-economic level, number of books in the home, ordinal position of the child in the family, and education of the parents.

Anderson and Kelley¹⁰ in their investigation of the home environment found that the only significant difference between their disability and control groups was in ordinal position in the family. One-half of their reading group were only or oldest children, while only one-third of the reading disability group fell into this category. The investigation further revealed trends toward the existence of a greater number of reading problems in the homes of the highest and of the lowest occupational groups.

Ladd,¹¹ who made one of the earliest studies in the field, purposed to explore the relationships that might exist between reading ability and factors of home background and personality. She found a slight positive relationship ($r = .18$) between reading age and socio-economic level. Further, she reported some consistent relationship between foreign-language background and reading ability. More recent studies in this area, while tending to confirm some of the results of

¹⁰M. Anderson and Mae Kelley, "An Inquiry into Traits Associated with Reading Disability," Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. II, No. 1 (September, 1931), pp. 46-63.

¹¹Margaret Rhoads Ladd, The Relation of Social, Economic, and Personal Characteristics to Reading Ability (Contributions to Education, No. 582. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1933).

these earlier studies, have taken advantage of the development of more refined instruments and the more accurate delineations of what constitutes the nature of the socio-economic influence on reading ability.

Studying children from two socio-economic levels, Murfin devised a scale to measure the child's attitudes toward school and school teachers, intellectual interests, ambitions and goals, restrictions of freedom, and outside motivating forces. Relating these to reading achievement he reached the following conclusion:

On each of the five areas of the Attitude Scale, the Upper school population, taken as a whole, held better attitudes and the Lower school population, taken as a whole, expressed attitudes more detrimental to school success. These two schools were most similar in their attitudes toward school and teachers and differed most significantly in regard to parental interest in and support of the school. Pupils from the Lower school reported more often the absence of parental interest in the school program, less cooperation with the school, and more conflict between the home and the school.¹²

Murfin also reported that the socio-economic scores obtained by use of Warner's techniques and scores on the intelligence test were more valid predictors of reading achievement than were the Attitude Scale scores. This finding suggests that there are factors contributing to the socio-economic score and the intelligence scores, not measured by the child's expression of his attitudes in the areas studied, but contributing more to success or failure in reading than does the Attitude score.

In a recent study of certain home factors and the extent of their

¹²Mark Murfin, "A Study of the Expressed Attitudes of Children from Two Socio-Economic Levels and the Relationship to Intelligence and Reading Achievement," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1952), pp. 171-72.

influence on the child's learning to read, Lowes¹³ investigated the educational and occupational status of the parents of seventy-five children in the first grade. She found that pupils whose parental status scores determined by the Urban Home Environment Rating Scale were in the upper quartile achieved higher scores on reading readiness and reading achievement tests than did the pupils whose parental status scores were low. She further investigated home activities that might be considered influential in reading success. She found a correlation of .44 between home activities and reading readiness. This study tends to confirm, to some extent, the previous studies relating to the socio-economic factor as it is determined by education and occupation of the parents and the number of home activities.

Designing her experiment on the basis of four interviews conducted with forty-two pupils in the first grade and their mothers, Milner¹⁴ reported that she was able to prove the hypothesis that reading ability in the first grade is associated with particular patterns of parent-child interactions and that these interactions are associated with the family social status.

Holding the socio-economic status constant, by pairing his Superior readers and Inferior readers according to socio-economic

¹³Ruth Violet Lowes, "The Relation of Certain Home Factors to Pupils' Readiness for Reading and Progress in Grade I," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1948).

¹⁴Ester Milner, "A Study of the Relationship between Reading Readiness in Grade One School Children and Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction," Child Development, 22:96-112, June, 1951.

background, intelligence, age and grade placement, and occupation of parents, Stewart investigated the parent-child interactions through a study of the child's scores on the Rogers Test of Personality Adjustment, the Story Completion Test, the Thematic Apperception Test, and the Rorschach. From these data he concluded that:

Motivation for superior readers to achieve success in reading seems to arise from their inability to afford failure. They are children of rejecting-type parents who value highly either reading achievement or general scholastic success. In order to ensure support from their parents or in order to ward off withdrawal of such support as is offered by their parents, the superior readers must succeed.

The inferior readers do not strive for success in reading either because they have no strong psychological motivation for success in reading or because they have powerful incentives for not being successful in reading. In the first instance, the inferior reader's parents place a low valuation on reading or general academic success and are not distressed by the absence of superior achievement. In the second instance, the inferior reading achievement is a vehicle for the child's expression of hostility toward an ambivalent parent who is hostile toward the child and also either over-protective or indulgent.¹⁵

Again investigating the area of ordinal position in the family and reading ability, Sheldon and Carillo¹⁶ found that the earlier the ordinal position in the family, the higher the per cent of good readers, when good readers are defined as those in the upper five per cent in the classroom as compared with poor readers who constitute the lower

¹⁵Robert S. Stewart, "Personality Maladjustment and Reading Achievement," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 20:417, April, 1950.

¹⁶W. D. Sheldon and Lawrence Carillo, "Relation of Parents, Home, and Certain Developmental Characteristics to Children's Reading Ability," Elementary School Journal, 52:262-70, January, 1952.

five per cent in the same classroom. They also found, as had earlier studies, that the child's attitude toward school and the educational level of the parents were definitely related to reading ability.

Thus, with a few notable exceptions, the research concerning the home environment as it may relate to reading ability has dealt with the more tangible evidence available to the investigators. However, Gray and others in their summary of research state:

It is probable that the more subtle environmental aspects such as proper motivation, economic stability, and cultural pressures are more closely related to reading proficiency than those which, like socio-economic status, can be objectively measured.¹⁷

The paucity of standardized instruments suitable for testing large populations, as well as the difficulty of enlisting the cooperation of an adequate sampling of parental population, has been a serious deterrent to investigations into the more subtle relationship factors in the home environment.

Summary and Rationale. Many studies have pointed to the inter-relationships of the child with his environment as a significant factor in reading achievement. These studies have indicated that the child's failure to achieve in reading may be the result of anxieties or passive resistance to the social role demanded of him. Parent-parent, parent-child, and sibling relationships are instrumental in the development of this personality which makes it possible for the child to accept or reject

¹⁷William S. Gray, and others, "Reading," Review of Educational Research, 7:507, December, 1939.

the reading situation.

Axline, in her analysis of the causes of emotional problems of poor readers, states:

If the parents have sent to school a child who has been either rejected or smothered with oversolicitous care, or is conflicted by inconsistent treatment at home--if the child is prodded at home to read, if the parents apply pressure and interfere with the school's program--if the parents try to satisfy their personal needs at the expense of their child, then the parents need the help, as well as the child, and are certainly a causative factor.¹⁸

Symonds supports this viewpoint that the parent attitudes and relationships with their children are basic to the type of personality the child develops.

Emotional security during childhood depends basically on the relationship engendered by the child's care and protection for which the parents must take the responsibility. It is on this relationship that the child's comforts and continued existence depend. The emotional attitudes of parents toward a child are far more important in giving a child security than the possession of a fine home, with cleanliness, comfort, and convenience. To give the growing child security parents should be stable, happy individuals, free from worry and anxiety, who have a task in life and a respected place in the community. Financial and social insecurity can be communicated to the child only through anxiety on the part of the parents. Parents can go through severe hardships and even move from place to place, but if they are courageous and meet life's problems competently, the child has a good guarantee of emotional security.¹⁹

With this support for the thesis that the parents' attitudes are basic to the child's emotional security and that the child's emotional security is a significant aspect of his reading development,

¹⁸Virginia Mae Axline, "Treatment of Emotional Problems of Poor Readers by Nondirective Therapy," Clinical Studies in Reading, (Supplementary Educational Monography, No. 88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, June, 1949), p. 149.

¹⁹Percival V. Symonds, The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1949), p. 2.

this study proposes to analyse parental attitudes in their relationship to reading achievement in the first grade.

CHAPTER III

TESTS, GROUPS, AND PROCEDURES USED IN THIS STUDY

This chapter will be concerned with a description of the procedures used in securing participants for this study, a description of the tests administered to the children and to the parents, description of the groups studies and the procedures used in analysis of the data.

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES USED IN SECURING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

To conduct a study to determine the relationship between reading achievement of children in the first grade and the attitudes and personality patterns of their parents, the writer found it essential to secure widespread interest on the part of the participating schools and their parent groups. The preliminary discussions with the school administrators disclosed that many parents of children in the first grade would be unfamiliar with this type of study thereby emphasizing the need to explain the plan of the study and its purpose to these parents. In order to achieve this understanding among the parents, the principals of the six participating schools called meetings of small groups of parents of children in the first grade. At these meetings the writer, accompanied by the parish supervisor of schools, discussed the project and aided in the organization of committees to explain the study to the other parents of children in the first grade.

In addition to these small group conferences the writer attended several Parent-Teacher and other community group meetings and offered further interpretation of the study. It was the opinion of the school administrators that these meetings would serve not only to interest the parents in the research underway but also to strengthen the community-school relationships. A minimum of three visits to each school was made during the first three months of the school term.

In addition to the work done by the committees, letters expressing his support of the project and requesting the parents' attendance at the final meeting were sent by the principal to all parents of children in the first grade. During the final meeting with the parents, the tests were administered either by the writer or by another reading consultant.

Standardized directions for administering the tests were strictly followed with the exception that both of the tests were read to the parents. This oral method was used to prevent possible invalidation of the test scores resulting from the inability of any parent to read the tests.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PARENT GROUP

Two hundred parents, or approximately one-fourth of all the parents of children in the first grades of Washington Parish School System, took the tests. The data obtained from fifty-three of these parents were not included in the final study because (1) the parents had moved away from the parish before the children were tested,

(2) some of the parents invalidated their own tests through a failure to understand the directions for marking, or (3) some of the children were excluded from the study because they did not meet the requirements established for selection of children to be included in the study. Of the 146 parents in the final study, there were 102 mothers and forty-four fathers. Fifty-eight children were represented by the mother only, thus leaving forty-four triads. The parents were subdivided into Upper, Middle, and Lower Groups according to the reading achievement of their children.

An analysis of the occupations of these parents indicated that the mothers were either housewives, school teachers, office workers or salesladies. The fathers' occupations ranged from unskilled laborers to professional people.

Several studies referred to in Chapter II revealed a relationship between the education of parents and various aspects of the child's reading ability and interests. For this reason, in the present study a tabulation was made of the educational status of the parents which showed the range of educational achievement to be from the third grade to the attainment of advanced degrees with the largest number of parents being high school graduates. These data concerning the educational attainment of these 146 parents are presented in Table I.

The methods of selecting parents to be included in this study presents a bias which must be recognized in the analysis of the data. The only parents who could be included in the study were those who remained in the community from the beginning of the school year at which

TABLE I

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE SELECTED 146 PARENTS
OF CHILDREN IN THE FIRST GRADE PRESENTED ACCORDING TO THE
READING ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN AND THE NUMBER OF
PARENTS ATTAINING EACH EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

	Lower	Middle	Upper
College	0	8	15
High School Graduate	27	31	21
Elementary School Graduate (8th Grade)	11	6	9
Below 8th Grade	8	2	5
Total	50	46	49

time the parents were tested through the eighth month of school when the children were tested. This method of inclusion eliminated from the study any representation of that group of migrant parents who find it necessary to move their children from one school to another during the school year.

It is generally assumed that interest in school activities on the part of parents is a factor in the child's school achievement. Therefore, it may be assumed that the attitude of interest in school activities is a constant factor among the parents in this study as revealed by their willingness to participate in the project. This may be significant in the analysis of the data.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILDREN INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

The children included in this study were selected on the basis of their parents' participation in the project. Each of the children was given a test of mental maturity and any child whose intelligence quotient was below ninety was eliminated. Any child was eliminated who was repeating the first grade or whose school health record showed any uncorrected physical defects that might tend to retard his reading growth. The final group of 102 children was composed of fifty-seven and forty-five boys.

The reading achievement of these children was measured in a group situation using the Gates Primary Reading Tests.¹ These tests

¹Arthur I. Gates, Gates Primary Reading Tests (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1943).

were administered in each school to the children whose parents had participated in the study. They were given during the first week of the eighth month of school, thus placing the expected norm at first grade-seventh month.

In the procedures adopted for the study, the children were divided into three groups. Group One, hereinafter referred to as the Upper Group, was composed of the children whose scores in reading achievement were in the upper one-third of the entire group. The Middle Group was composed of children whose scores in reading achievement were in the middle one-third of the group. The group known as the Lower Group consisted of the children who scored in the lowest one-third in reading achievement. First, the 102 children represented by their mothers were divided into the three groups described above. Later, the forty-four of these children who were represented by their fathers as well as their mothers, were divided into three groups. Table II shows the reading levels of the three groups when the division was made in terms of the children represented by the mothers. Table III shows the reading level of the three groups when the division was made in terms of the children represented by both parents.

The chronological ages of children in this study show no deviation from what might be expected of children in the first grade in Louisiana where the minimum age limit for entrance to school has been established at sixty-eight months. The mean chronological age for the entire group of 102 children in September, 1953, was 73.53 months. The thirty-four children in the Upper Group had a mean

TABLE II

RANGE AND MEAN READING GRADE LEVEL IN
TERMS OF UPPER, MIDDLE, AND LOWER ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS
OF 102 CHILDREN REPRESENTED IN THE STUDY BY THEIR MOTHERS

	Range	Mean Score
Upper (N:34)	1.801-2.51	2.007
Middle (N:34)	1.801-1.80	1.677
Lower (N:34)	1.28 -1.60	1.474
Total (N:102)	1.28-2.51	1.719

TABLE III

RANGE AND MEAN READING GRADE LEVEL IN
TERMS OF UPPER, MIDDLE, AND LOWER ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS
OF 44 CHILDREN REPRESENTED IN THE STUDY BY BOTH PARENTS

	Range	Mean Score
Upper (N:15)	1.801-2.51	2.020
Middle (N:14)	1.80 -1.80	1.686
Lower (N:15)	1.28 -1.59	1.458
Total (N:44)	1.28 -2.51	1.721

chronological age of 73.94 months, while the thirty-four in the Lower Group had a mean of 73.32 months.

The California Mental Maturity Test (Primary Series)² was administered to these children, one factor in the selection for inclusion of a child in the study being that he be in the normal to superior range in intelligence. The intelligence quotients of children included in the study ranged from 94 to 150, with a mean of 118.88.

Approximately two-thirds (66.01 per cent) of the children in this study were only, oldest, or youngest children in the family. Thirty-one children were oldest children and the largest number of these (fourteen) was in the Middle Group. Thirty-three of the children were youngest children in the family (eleven in the Upper Group, ten in the Middle Group, and twelve in the Lower Group). Fourteen were only children, half of them being in the Upper Group.

IV. INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE STUDY

The instruments used in this study included group tests administered to parents of first grade children and group tests administered to the children included in the study.

Tests Administered to the Parents. In the choice of instruments to be used in this study, it was desirable to select those that could

²Elizabeth T. Sullivan, Willis W. Clark, and Ernest W. Tiegs, California Test of Mental Maturity (Primary) (Los Angeles: California Test Bureau, 1951 edition).

be used by pre-school study groups, especially if the outcome of the study revealed that the factors measured by these tests were related to the children's performance in the school.

Since it was desirable to get as large a sampling as possible, the tests chosen for the study needed to be group tests. Ease of administration as well as length of time required for the completion of the tests were important considerations.

Another aspect to consider was the selection of tests that would measure parental attitudes and characteristic of personality having a possible relationship to the child's reading achievement. For example, it has been shown that a more active home life stimulates children to better reading achievement.³ It might be assumed that active home life is created by parents who tend toward sociability in their behavior patterns and who expect their children to have active social relationships.

Further, it might be assumed that children who in the pre-school years have learned to accept responsibility for their own actions are more able to adapt to classroom situations than are children who have been kept in a state of dependency. This need to keep their children dependent may be expressed in the parental attitude toward child-rearing and may be measured by the degree to which the parents think children should be given freedom of choice. The inability to give children

³Ruth Violet Lowes, "The Relation of Certain Home Factors to Pupils' Readiness for Reading and Progress in Grade I." (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1948).

The original scale consisted of two parts, "The Parent Questionnaire" and a "Choose Your Child" scale. This scale was revised by the staff of the Institute of Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota. The revised scale includes the forty most discriminative items from Miles' "Parent Questionnaire" and the forty most discriminative items from Miles' "Choose Your Child" selection.

What the scale measures. The higher the total score, the greater is the amount of whatever is being measured by the scale in the parent being measured. A high score indicates that the parent is more willing to give the child responsibility for his own actions, has more understanding of the need for the child to make his own choice and decisions, and is more concerned with his becoming a self-reliant and responsible individual later on. This can be thought of as parental insight into personality and social needs as developed in a society in which democratic training looks forward to high degrees of individual choice, freedom, and responsibility.

In Part A of the scale, many items deal with specific incidents, in which the parent has an opportunity to permit freedom of choice. In each instance there is some risk, but emphasis goes to recognizing the child's right to profit from his own experience. Part B of the scale which measures parents' expectations or aspirations for their children emphasizes participation and responsibility, i.e., an active relation rather than withdrawal, spectatorship, failure to try, or a passive approach to relations with other persons.

If the two concepts are coupled together, emphasis is definitely upon a relation in which the young individual is both willing and able to participate, i.e., is active, independent, and self-reliant.⁷

This scale seemed to meet the needs of this study in two areas: its use would yield a quantitative comparable score on parental opinions as to the degree of freedom of choice to be given to children and as to

⁷Memorandum on the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions
(Preliminary Statement, December, 1951), p. 3.

of choice may reflect parental emotional instability or a lack of self-sufficiency.

The empirical evidence of clinical data has suggested that the failure of the established family pattern to promote healthy identifications by the child may have an effect on his learning to read. If a child identifies with a parent who does not read, or who "acts out" through the child his own unresolved conflicts concerning school achievement, the child may fail to see the worthwhileness in learning to read. The parents' basic personality problems in the areas of dominance and submissiveness may be involved in hindering the child's normal progress in making wholesome identifications. Therefore, one might profitably explore this area of parent personality in relationship to a child's reading achievement.

The instruments chosen to measure these attitudes and characteristics of personality were the Bernreuter Personality Inventory⁴ and the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions.⁵ Originally the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions was derived from a scale used by Katherine A. Miles⁶ in her doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota.

⁴Robert C. Bernreuter, The Personality Inventory. (Stanford, California: Standord University Press, 1935).

⁵Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions (Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, n.d.).

⁶Katherine A. Miles, "The Relationship of Certain Factors in the Home Background and the Qualities of Leadership Shown by Children," (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1945).

the levels of aspirations in social relationships held for them. At the same time, this scale met the other requirements established for instruments to be used in this study.

The Personality Inventory had two advantages for use in this study: (1) the years of study and use of the instrument have enabled the person giving the test to know what it will measure and what its limitations are; (2) certain aspects of personality which had been selected for investigation in relationship to reading achievement could be scored separately. The principal limitations of the Personality Inventory have been shown to lie in the ability of the testee to get a better score than he deserves and in the inadequacy of the test to predict an individual's suitability for a particular job or life situation.⁸ In this study, this limitation was probably offset in that the testee was taking an active part in a study group and knew his scores would not be used for any purpose other than research. The investigator was not interested in predictions from individual scores but was concerned with group trends.

The Personality Inventory, as originally devised, contained four scales, now known as the "B" scales. The two "F" scales devised by Flanagan,⁹ have been shown to be practically independent measures

⁸Oscar K. Buros, Editor, The Fourth Mental Measurements Yearbook (Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1953), pp. 135-40.

⁹J. C. Flanagan, Factor Analysis in the Study of Personality (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1935).

correlating so highly with the original four scales that the "P" scales alone may be used.

The three scales used in this study were the F1-C (a measure of self-confidence and of general emotional stability), the F2-S (a measure of sociability or self-sufficiency), and the B4-D (a measure of dominance-submission).

Sources of the Data Concerning the Children in the Study. To select from the group of children whose parents had participated in the study those children who could meet the requirements established for the study, it was necessary to administer a test of mental maturity and to examine the school records concerning the child's health and the date of his entrance to school.

The California Test of Mental Maturity was administered by the investigator. This test is composed of eleven sub-tests purported to measure those aspects of mental ability which are related to success in various types of school activity. The test was employed in this study because of its division into language and non-language sections and because of the ease with which it is administered to groups of children.

The Gates Primary Reading Tests were selected to be used for the purpose of grouping the children according to reading achievement. These tests consist of three sub-tests or types: Word Recognition, Sentence Reading, and Paragraph Reading. Each sub-test score may be transcribed into a reading grade score and a reading age score. These

scores on the three sub-tests may be averaged so that a composite reading achievement grade level for each child may be secured. The norms for this test are based upon approximately 250,000 records obtained from schools representing all sections of the United States.

V. TREATMENT OF THE DATA

In order to study the attitudes and personality characteristics of parents in relationship to the reading achievement of their children, the data obtained from these parents and children were treated in three major ways: (1) the parents' scores were arranged into groups according to the reading achievement of the children that these parents represented. The differences between groups were analyzed and statistical measures were employed to determine the significance of these differences; (2) correlations were computed between the mothers' scores on each variable measured and the reading achievement of their children in terms of the sex of the child. Correlations were also computed to show the relationship of the fathers' scores on each variable to the reading achievement of their sons or to the reading achievement of their daughters.

In those cases where both parents of a child participated in the study, the pattern of the mother-father combination on each variable was determined. The relationship of these patterns to reading achievement was presented in terms of the percentage of each pattern, or type of mother-father combination, occurring among the parents of the children in the Upper and the Lower reading achievement groups.

This analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The general hypothesis to be tested in this study was that the attitudes and personality patterns of parents of children who achieved in the upper groups in reading during the first year of schooling would be different from the attitudes and personality patterns of parents of children who achieved in the lower groups in reading. Having administered the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions and the Barnes Personality Inventory to 146 (forty-four fathers and one hundred and two mothers) of 102 children in the first grades of Washington Parish (Louisiana) School System, the investigator analyzed the data to determine any differences between the scores of the parents of Upper Group children and the scores of the parents of Lower Group children on the total tests and the sub-tests and to determine whether or not any existing differences were significant. Further exploration was made to discover any differences that might exist when the data were analyzed in terms of the sex of the child and the sex of the parents, and to reveal mother-father combinations in attitudes and personality (those personality characteristics and attitudes exhibited by the mother and the father of the same child) that might prove to be associated with reading achievement.

The data obtained from the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions are presented first to show the opinions that these parents expressed toward certain aspects of child rearing.

I. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OBTAINED ON THE MINNESOTA SCALE OF PARENTS' OPINIONS

The Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions measured the parents' opinions regarding (a) the freedom of choice in their own behavior to be given to children and (b) the aspirations or expectations held for children in the area of social relationships. A high score on Part A of the MSPO indicates the degree to which the parent is willing to give the child freedom of choice or responsibility for his own behavior. A low score indicates more control on the part of the parent and possibly more protectiveness toward the child. A high score on Part B is indicative of a desire on the part of the parent to have a child who would be active in his social relationships. A parent who achieves a low score on Part B would tend to expect a less active, or a passive, reaction from his child in social relationships. The latter parents would be expected to respond in a negative or indifferent manner to an item stating that children should take part in school activities, while the parents who achieve high scores would be expected to respond in a positive manner to this item.

Table IV shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the total group of 146 parents on the total scale and the mean scores and standard deviations for the various sub-groups. The thirty-four mothers whose children ranked in the Upper Group (upper one-third of this group in reading achievement) achieved a higher mean score on this test than did the mothers of the children who ranked in the Middle Group or the

TABLE IV

MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR TOTAL
GROUP OF 146 PARENTS AND VARIOUS SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
MINNESOTA PARENT OPINION SCALE

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE _m
All Parents in Study	146	263.95	32.88	2.7218
Mothers (Total Group)	102	267.05	33.86	3.3524
Mothers (Upper Group)	34	277.56	29.02	5.0513
Mothers (Middle Group)	34	266.58	24.59	4.254
Mothers (Lower Group)	34	255.38	32.82	5.7127
Fathers (Total Group)	44	259.27	32.54	4.9628
Fathers (Upper Group)	15	260.15	26.28	7.0229
Fathers (Middle Group)	14	275.04	28.04	7.7759
Fathers (Lower Group)	15	245.75	34.59	9.1902

*Parents are grouped in terms of the reading achievement of the child they represented.

Lower Group in reading achievement. However, the fathers included in the study did not follow the same pattern. The fathers of children in the Middle Group in reading achieved a higher mean score on the total test than did the fathers of children in the Upper or the Lower Group. The fathers of the children in the Upper Group achieved a higher mean score than did the fathers of children in the Lower Group.

In testing the significance of the difference between the mean score of the mothers of children in the Upper Group and the mean score of the mothers of children in the Lower Group on the total test, a critical ratio of 2.91 was obtained which is significant at the .01 level of confidence.

A critical ratio of 1.25 was obtained when testing the significance of the difference between the mean scores obtained by the fathers of children in the Upper Group and the mean score obtained by the fathers of children in the Lower Group on the total test. This is not a statistically significant difference. However, the concern in this study was with the probability that the fathers of Upper Group children would score higher than the fathers of Lower Group children. Therefore, by dealing only with the positive end of the sampling distribution of the differences, it is possible to conclude that approximately once in ten samples would a larger positive difference than that obtained appear by chance. This again is not statistically significant but points toward possibilities for further investigations.

Table V shows the mean scores and standard deviations on Part A of the MSPD for the total group of 146 parents and sub-groups. The mean scores of the mothers of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Groups

TABLE V
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR TOTAL
GROUP OF 146 PARENTS AND VARIOUS SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
MINNESOTA PARENT OPINION SCALE, PART A

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE _m
All Parents in Study	146	123.54	20.80	1.721
Mothers (Total Group)	102	125.87	20.50	2.029
Mothers (Upper Group)	34	132.41	18.08	2.798
Mothers (Middle Group)	34	126.88	21.30	3.707
Mothers (Lower Group)	34	118.12	20.58	3.582
Fathers (Total Group)	44	118.14	20.90	3.187
Fathers (Upper Group)	15	121.88	15.86	4.238
Fathers (Middle Group)	14	126.78	20.81	5.770
Fathers (Lower Group)	15	107.13	19.69	5.259

*Parents are grouped in terms of the reading achievement
of the child they represent

follow the same trend as was found in the analysis of total test scores. Again, the fathers of children in the Middle Group achieved a higher mean score than did the fathers of the Upper and Lower Groups. The critical ratio of the difference between the mean score of mothers of Upper Group children and the mean score of mothers of Lower Group children ($CR=3.15$) indicated that the obtained difference is significant (.01 level of confidence). The critical ratio of the difference obtained between the mean score of the fathers of the Upper Group and the fathers of the Lower Group ($CR=2.18$) was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Table VI shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the total group of parents included in the study and the sub-groups on Part B of MSPO. The scores obtained by parents on this test tend to be higher than those on Part A although each sub-test has the same possible score (200). This may be a result of the selectivity factors involved in securing the population. These parents, by volunteering to take part in a school research project, may be said to demonstrate an interest in active social relationships. It may be assumed that such parents would expect active social relationships on the part of their children. These selectivity factors may not affect the scores on Part A to the same extent.

On Part B of the scale the difference between the mean scores of the mothers of the Upper Group and the mean scores of mothers of the Lower Group is significant at the .05 level of confidence ($CR=2.06$). There is a negligible difference between the mean scores of fathers

TABLE VI

MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR TOTAL
GROUP OF 146 PARENTS AND VARIOUS SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
MINNESOTA SCALE OF PARENTS' OPINIONS, PART B

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE _m
All Parents in Study	146	141.01	16.40	1.36
Mothers (Total Group)	102	140.97	17.20	1.70
Mothers (Upper Group)	34	145.15	16.08	2.79
Mothers (Middle Group)	34	139.70	18.92	3.29
Mothers (Lower Group)	34	137.26	16.07	2.62
Fathers (Total Group)	44	141.09	14.40	2.19
Fathers (Upper Group)	15	138.27	14.35	3.63
Fathers (Middle Group)	14	148.86	8.85	2.45
Fathers (Lower Group)	15	138.60	16.10	4.30

*Parents are grouped in terms of the reading achievement
of the child they represent

of the Upper Group and fathers of the Lower Group (Upper - 138.27; Lower - 138.60).

In the data presented here, the mothers of children who achieved in the upper one-third of the group in reading were more inclined to express the opinion that children should be given more responsibility for their own behavior and more freedom of choice than were the mothers of children who achieved in the lower one-third of the group in reading. The same mothers of the Upper Group tended to expect more active social relationships on the part of the child than the mothers of the Lower Group. The scores of the mothers supported the hypothesis that the attitude of the parent on these two scales will tend to be positively related to the child's reading achievement.

The scores of the fathers in this population did not support the hypothesis. On both scales, the fathers of children in the Middle Group obtained a higher mean score than fathers of children of the Upper or Lower Groups. On Part A the fathers of the Upper Group achieved a higher mean score than did the fathers of the Lower Group. On Part B, however, the fathers of the Upper Group and the fathers of the Lower Group had almost the same mean scores. While it must be recognized that the sampling may have been too small to show the true nature of the difference, other possible explanations seem warranted.

One such explanation might lie in the unequal ratio of boys to girls in each group. The Upper Group contained twenty-three girls and eleven boys; the Lower Group contained eighteen girls and sixteen boys. It might be anticipated that any significant mother-son or

father-son relationships that affect reading achievement would contribute more to the Lower Group mean than to the Upper Group mean, while any significant mother-daughter or father-daughter relationships would constitute a greater factor in the Upper Group. If, for example, a high positive relationship should exist between the reading achievement of girls and their parents' attitudes as measured by this scale, a preponderance of high scores would fall in the Upper Group, where all twenty-three parents of the girls would be expected to have high scores on the opinion scale. Thus, the combination of an unequal number of boys and girls into one group may tend to conceal the true nature of the relationship between parental attitudes on these scales and the reading achievement of children.

In view of the very great concern among reading specialists as to why so many more boys than girls fail to learn to read, these data were analyzed in terms of the sex of the child and the sex of the parent. Table VII shows the correlation found between the reading achievement of sons and scores obtained by their mothers and by their fathers on both parts of the Scale. These correlations were computed by the rank difference method. For mothers and sons a relatively high correlation ($\rho = .44$) is between reading achievement of the boys and the mothers' opinions concerning aspirations held for the child in social relationships. The correlation between the mothers' scores on Part A (freedom of choice to be given to children) and boys' reading achievement was also a relatively high positive one ($\rho = .48$). The coefficient of correlation obtained between the fathers' expressed

TABLE VII
CORRELATIONS OBTAINED BETWEEN THE PARENTS' RANKS ON PART A AND ON PART B OF THE MSPQ AND THEIR CHILDREN'S RANKS ON THE GATES PRIMARY READING TESTS

Relationship of Parent and Child	Rho Part A	Rho Part B
Mothers-Daughters N=57	.19	.07
Mothers-Sons N=45	.48	.44
Fathers-Daughters N=23	.20	-.10
Fathers-Sons N=21	.49	-.16

opinions as to the degree of freedom of choice to be given to children and boys' reading achievement showed a relatively high relationship ($\rho = .49$). Within the group studied, the reading achievement of boys tended to be more closely related to the mothers' aspirations in social relationships and to both the mothers' and fathers' opinions concerning freedom of choice to be given to children than was the reading achievement of girls.

Another interesting factor contained in these data was the slightly negative correlation found between fathers' scores on Part B of the MSPQ and the reading achievement of both their sons and their daughters. It would appear that there was a slight tendency for children of both sexes to decrease in reading achievement as their fathers' aspirations for them in social areas rose.

While one can only theorize on the data presented here, it would seem that there is evidence that parental attitudes or opinions expressed here are only slightly influential in the reading achievement of girls. On the other hand, it seems that parental opinions as measured by the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions may be considerably more significant in the reading achievement of boys. It is recognized that further investigation with larger and more diverse samplings would be needed to substantiate this observation.

Thus far, the analysis of the data has been presented only in terms of a total group of mothers and a total group of fathers. The next question to arise was that of the relationship between reading achievement and parental attitudes when father-mother combinations

were studied. There were forty-four triads in this study. Twenty-three of these were mother-father-daughter combinations and twenty-one were mother-father-son combinations. Table VIII presents a numerical tabulation of children in each group in terms of the various patterns of parent combinations on the two parts of the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions. For this analysis, the children were classified as successful readers if their reading achievement scores were above the mean score obtained for the entire group of 102 children and as unsuccessful readers if their reading achievement scores were below the mean score for the entire group.

From Table VIII it may be seen that forty-five per cent of the twenty children classified as successful readers were from families where both parents scored above the mean score of the entire group on Part A of the MSPO (degree of freedom of choice to be given to children). Only 28.2 per cent of the unsuccessful readers were from families where both parents scored High on this scale. At the opposite end of the scale where both parents scored Low on this scale, the difference between percentages of the successful and unsuccessful readers was even greater. Included in this group of children whose parents both scored Low were ten boys, nine of whom were unsuccessful readers. The critical ratio of the differences between percentages of the successful readers whose mother-father combination pattern was Low-Low and percentages of the unsuccessful readers with the same parental pattern was 2.83, indicating a statistically significant difference. The Low-High combination

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN IN THE SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL READING GROUPS WHOSE PARENTS WERE CLASSIFIED ON PARTS A AND B OF THE MSPD IN EACH OF THE PATTERNS INDICATED*

Group	N	Percentages for Each Type Parental Pattern			
Part A		H-H	H-L	L-H	L-L
Successful Readers	20	45.0	20.0	15.0	20.0
Unsuccessful Readers	24	29.2	20.8	0	50.0
Part B					
Successful Readers	20	45.0	20.0	15.0	20.0
Unsuccessful Readers	24	25.0	20.8	29.2	25.0

*Meanings of Symbols Used:

- H-H Both parents scored above the mean of the group of 146 parents on this scale.
- H-L The mother scored above the mean of the group of 146 parents and the father scored below the mean on this scale.
- L-H The mother scored below the mean of the entire group on this scale and the father scored above the mean of the entire group.
- L-L Both parents scored below the mean of the entire group on this scale.

seemed to be associated with successful reading achievement as no child with this combination of parents was an unsuccessful reader.

On Part B of the MSPO (aspirations held for children in their social relationships), the greatest difference between percentages of the successful and unsuccessful readers was obtained in the High-High classification. Of the successful readers, forty-five per cent were children of High-High parent combinations, as compared with twenty-five per cent of the unsuccessful readers from such families (OR-1.75).

II. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OBTAINED ON THE BERNREUTER PERSONALITY INVENTORY

The Bernreuter Personality Inventory was analyzed in terms of the results obtained on the "F" scales. The D4-D scale was also analyzed to obtain a rating on the dominance-submission score for each parent, as this scale seemed to be particularly applicable to an analysis of family patterns.

The scale designated as F1-C purports to measure the degree of self-confidence of the testee. Persons scoring high tend to have feelings of inferiority. A low score indicates a wholesome self-confidence and self-integration. If the self-confidence of the parent should be positively related to the child's ability to achieve, a low score on the F1-C scale would be expected of parents of children who score high in reading achievement.

The F2-S scale is a measure of sociability. A high score on this scale indicates that the testee tends toward solitariness and

non-sociability. A person scoring low on this scale tends to be sociable. The selective factors previously discussed for this study may tend to conceal any true differences that might exist in an unselected population on this scale.

The B4-D scale is a measure of dominance-submission, high scores indicating a tendency toward domination of others in face-to-face situations.

Table IX shows the mean scores and comparable percentile ranks achieved by the various parent sub-groups on the dominance-submission scale. The percentile rank comparable to the mean raw score obtained by the mothers of children who achieved in the Upper Group in reading was forty-five, as compared with a percentile rank of thirty-five for children who achieved in the Lower Group in reading. The fathers of children in the Upper Group had a percentile rank of forty-four as compared to a percentile rank of sixteen for fathers of the Lower Group. the chi-square was computed to determine the significance of differences on the B4-D scale for the mothers of the Upper, Middle, and Lower Group children. The chi-square obtained was 4.9431. For four degrees of freedom, a chi-square of this value would be exceeded .32 of the time. The chi-square computed to determine the significance of the difference obtained between the fathers of the upper fifty per cent was 5.8150 (d.f.-1; P-.02). From this it may be concluded that the differences obtained on the B4-D scale by mothers of Upper, Middle, and Lower Group children is not statistically significant, while that obtained by the fathers is significant. The differences on this scale

TABLE IX

MEANS COMPARABLE PERCENTILE RANK AND STANDARD
 DEVIATIONS OF THE VARIOUS PARENT SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
 B4-D SCALE (DOMINANCE-SUBMISSION) OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Group	N	Mean	Comparable Percentile Rank	SD	SE _m
Total Group (Mothers)	102	-3.95	37	58.27	5.79
Upper Group (Mothers)	34	7.56	45	52.16	9.08
Middle Group (Mothers)	34	-13.59	31	66.48	11.67
Lower Group (Mothers)	34	-5.76	36	53.04	9.23
Total Group (Fathers)	44	28.00	34	52.03	7.95
Upper Group (Fathers)	16	47.13	44	57.33	15.32
Middle Group (Fathers)	14	44.21	42	40.81	11.31
Lower Group (Fathers)	15	-6.27	16	38.29	9.69

*Groups established according to the reading achievement
 of the child represented by the parent

indicate that children in the Lower Group have fathers who tend to be submissive in their face-to-face relationships. The mothers' scores on the dominance-submission scale do not seem to be closely related to the child's reading achievement.

According to the results obtained on the B4-D scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, there were nineteen fathers who were classified as submissive (below the twenty-fifth percentile on this scale). Eleven of these were fathers of children in the Lower Reading Group, three of these were fathers of children in the Middle Group in reading, and five were fathers of children in the Upper Group in reading. The five fathers who were classified as dominating in face-to-face relationships (seventy-fifth percentile and above) were all parents of children in the Middle or Upper Groups in reading achievement.

The mean scores of the various groups on the F1-C scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory are presented in Table X. On this scale, where a high score indicates feelings of inferiority on the part of the testee, both the fathers and the mothers of Lower Group children have a higher mean score than do the fathers and the mothers of Upper Group children. Of the twenty-two fathers whose percentile rank on this scale was above seventy-five, thirteen (fifty-nine per cent) were fathers of children in the Lower Group. Forty per cent (twenty) of the fifty mothers whose percentile rank was above seventy-five were mothers of Lower Group children.

Applying the chi-square test of significance to the differences

TABLE X

MEANS, COMPARABLE PERCENTILE RANKS, AND STANDARD
DEVIATIONS OF THE VARIOUS PARENT SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
FI-C SCALE (SELF-CONFIDENCE) OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Group	N	Mean	Comparable Percentile Rank	SD	SE _m
Total Group (Mothers)	102	53.04	73	88.13	8.73
Upper Group (Mothers)	34	32.68	66	76.99	13.40
Middle Group (Mothers)	34	59.06	76	95.21	16.57
Lower Group (Mothers)	34	63.38	76	90.14	15.69
Total Group (Fathers)	44	-3.43	75	80.62	12.29
Upper Group (Fathers)	15	-45.33	60	71.59	19.13
Middle Group (Fathers)	14	-19.35	70	79.78	22.12
Lower Group (Fathers)	15	53.33	69	52.61	14.03

*Groups established according to the reading achievement
of the child represented by the parent

obtained on the F1-C scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory between the mothers of the three reading groups, a chi-square value of 4.9416 was obtained. The P. of this value with four degrees of freedom is .31, indicating that the null hypothesis should be retained. The chi-square computed to determine the significance of the difference obtained between fathers of the upper fifty per cent and the lower fifty per cent of the total group of forty-four children was 5.8190 ($df=1$; $P=.02$). This is statistically significant.

The mean scores, shown in Table XI, indicate a fairly high degree of sociability for all groups. When the chi-square test of significance was applied to the data obtained for mothers and those obtained for fathers, no statistically significant differences were found ($P=.26$ in both cases). While the procedures used in the selection of the parents included in this study may have influenced the sociability factor being measured by the F2-3 scale, small differences did exist and might be increased if a non-select population were secured. Since these parents did represent both achieving and non-achieving children these data suggest that for the parents represented in this study the degree of sociability on the part of parents is not a significant factor in the reading achievement of children.

To investigate further the relationship between the attitudes and personality characteristics of parents and their children's reading achievement during the first year of school, the data obtained from the administration of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory to

TABLE XI

MEANS, COMPARABLE PERCENTILE RANKS, AND STANDARD
DEVIATIONS OF THE VARIOUS PARENT SUB-GROUPS* ON THE
F2-S SCALE (SELF-CONFIDENCE) OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Group	N	Mean	Comparable Percentile Rank	SD	SE _m
Total Group (Mothers)	102	-49.90	30	42.61	4.2366
Upper Group (Mothers)	34	-56.76	26	39.46	6.8686
Middle Group (Mothers)	34	-51.00	29	46.16	8.0348
Lower Group (Mothers)	34	-41.94	36	41.22	7.1749
Total Group (Fathers)	44	-45.82	20	39.56	5.9168
Upper Group (Fathers)	15	-33.53	29	44.29	11.8359
Middle Group (Fathers)	14	-46.21	20	27.44	7.8095
Lower Group (Fathers)	15	-57.73	14	40.44	10.8071

*Groups established according to the reading achievement
of the children represented by the parent

the 146 parents included in the study were analyzed in terms of the sex of the parent and the sex of the child. The coefficients of correlation between the parents' scores on the three scales of the Personality Inventory and the reading achievement of their children were computed by the rank-differences method for mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son, and father-daughter combinations are presented in Table XII.

The correlations shown for the dominance-submission scale indicate a substantial relationship between the father's tendency toward domination in face-to-face situations and his son's success in learning to read ($\rho = .56$). The relationship between mothers' relative rank on this scale and the reading achievement of their daughters was negligible ($\rho = -.02$). In father-daughter and mother-son combinations, the relationships between relative ranks of the parents on the B4-D scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory and the child's achievement in reading were positive, but not high.

It will be noted that three of the correlations shown in Table XII in the F1-C column are negative, indicating that when parents' scores were ranked from highest to lowest, the ranks of children on reading achievement tended to be negatively related to parents' ranks. These correlations must be interpreted with the consideration that high scores on the F1-C scale of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory indicate a lack of self-confidence. Therefore, the correlations show that in father-son, father-daughter, and mother-son combinations, self-confidence on the part of the parent tended to

TABLE XII
CORRELATIONS OBTAINED BETWEEN THE PARENTS'
RANKS ON THE B4-D, F1-C, AND F2-S SCALES OF THE PERSONALITY
INVENTORY AND THEIR CHILDREN'S RANK ON THE GATES
PRIMARY READING TESTS

Relationship of Parent and Child	Dominance- Submission B4-D Rho	Self Confidence F1-C Rho	Sociability F2-S Rho
Fathers-Sons	.56	-.56	.23
Fathers-Daughters	.29	-.42	.11
Mothers-Sons	.33	-.56	-.30
Mothers-Daughters	-.02	.07	-.14

be related to successful reading achievement on the part of the child. As on the M-D scale, the correlations between the degree of self-confidence of the mothers and the daughter's reading achievement was negligible.

The correlations between the parents' scores on the P2-S scale and their children's reading achievement were slight, but interesting, in that for mother-child combinations they were both negative and the correlations for the father-child combinations were both positive. From these data it would appear that there is a slight tendency for solitariness and independence on the father's part to be associated with success in reading on the child's part.

Another interesting aspect of the correlations contained in Table XII is the relatively higher correlations obtained between father-son and mother-son combinations than were obtained between father-daughter and mother-daughter combinations.

Analysis of the data obtained on the Personality Inventory was made to identify patterns appearing in mother-father combinations in those cases where the child was represented in this study by both parents.

Parents' scores on each of the three scales used were classified according to the percentile rank equivalency to show the degree of each trait expressed by the mother and by the father of each child. Percentile ranks of seventy-five and above were classified as showing a low degree of the trait measured. Scores falling below the twenty-sixth percentile were classified as showing a low degree

of the trait measured. Scores falling between these classifications were interpreted as indicating an average degree of the trait. The children of the forty-four parents represented in this analysis were classified as successful readers where their scores on the Gates Reading Test were on or above the mean reading level of the 102 children included in the study. Unsuccessful readers were classified as those falling below this mean. The number of successful and unsuccessful readers in each of the mother-father combinations is presented in Tables XIII, XIV, and XV.

The distribution shown in Table XIII indicates that the predominant mother-father pattern among successful readers was that pattern in which both parents were classified as average in self-confidence. The predominant pattern among unsuccessful readers was that in which both parents were low in self-confidence. This group constituted approximately fifty per cent of the unsuccessful reading group.

When numerical tabulations were made of the children in each mother-father classification on the dominance-submission scale (Table XIV) the largest number of unsuccessful readers was shown to be in family situations where the fathers were submissive and the mothers were either average or submissive. Among the successful readers the most frequently appearing pattern was that in which both parents were average on this scale.

Table XV shows the patterns of mother-father combinations on the F2-S (sociability) scale of the Personality Inventory and the

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL READERS AND UNSUCCESSFUL
READERS IN EACH CLASSIFICATION OF MOTHER-FATHER
COMBINATIONS ON THE F1-C SCALE OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Mother's Classification	Father's Classification	Number in Successful Reading Group	Number in Unsuccess- ful Reading Group	Total
High in Self- Confidence	High in Self- Confidence	1	0	1
High in Self- Confidence	Average	2	0	2
High in Self- Confidence	Low in Self- Confidence	1	0	1
Average	Average	8	2	10
Average	Low in Self- Confidence	3	4	7
Average	High in Self- Confidence	0	1	1
Low in Self- Confidence	High in Self- Confidence	1	0	1
Low in Self- Confidence	Average	2	6	8
Low in Self- Confidence	Low in Self- Confidence	2	11	13
		20	24	44

TABLE XIV

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL READERS AND UNSUCCESSFUL
 READERS IN EACH CLASSIFICATION OF MOTHER-FATHER
 COMBINATIONS ON THE B4-D SCALE OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Mother's Classification	Father's Classification	Number in Successful Reading Group	Number in Unsuccess- ful Reading Group	Total
Dominant	Dominant	2	0	2
Dominant	Average	2	0	2
Dominant	Submissive	3	1	4
Average	Dominant	0	1	1
Average	Average	7	5	12
Average	Submissive	1	6	7
Submissive	Dominant	1	1	2
Submissive	Average	2	4	6
Submissive	Submissive	2	6	8
		<hr/> 20	<hr/> 24	<hr/> 44

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL READERS AND UNSUCCESSFUL
READERS IN EACH CLASSIFICATION OF MOTHER-FATHER
COMBINATIONS ON THE F2-S SCALE OF THE PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Mother's Classification	Father's Classification	Number in Successful Reading Group	Number in Unsuccess- ful Reading Group	Total
Highly Social	Non-Social	5	4	9
Highly Social	Average	4	5	9
Average	Average	4	5	9
Average	Highly Social	4	9	13
Average	Non-Social	2	0	2
Non-Social	Average	1	0	1
Non-Social	Highly Social	0	1	1
		—	—	—
		20	24	44

number of successful and unsuccessful readers appearing in each pattern. It will be noted from this table that twelve of the twenty successful readers were in family situations where both parents were average or above in sociability expressed. Nineteen unsuccessful readers were in similar family situations. The second most frequently appearing pattern for both successful and unsuccessful readers was that in which the mother expressed a high degree of sociability and the father expressed a low degree of the same trait.

The chapter has presented the analysis of the data obtained for the 146 parents and the 102 children included in this study. Included in this chapter were analyses of the significance of differences between parents of Upper Reading Group children and the parents of Lower Reading Group children on the various sub-tests of the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions and the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. Further explorations were made of the relationships between parental attitudes and personality traits in terms of mother-father combinations where the child was represented in this study by both parents and in terms of the sex of the child and the sex of the parent.

The following chapter will present the conclusions and implications of this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Previous studies of the nature of reading disability have consistently referred to the need for further investigation of the relationship of the home environment to reading achievement. Following the trends suggested by these studies, the present research was undertaken to explore certain attitudes and characteristics of personality of the parents in relationship to the reading achievement of their children during the first year of school. The specific attitudes chosen for this study were those reflected in expressed opinions pertaining to aspirations held for children in the area of social relationships, and freedom of choice to be given to children. This investigation has dealt with three aspects of the personality of parents, namely, dominance-submission, self-confidence, and sociability. The aims of the present study were (1) to investigate the nature of the relationship that existed between each of the five selected aspects of attitudes and personality characteristics of parents and the reading achievement of their children; (2) to determine the extent to which the sex of the parent and the sex of the child were factors in such relationships as existed in the groups studied; (3) to describe, insofar as possible with a limited sampling, the patterns, or inter-relationships, of mother-father combinations that were most frequently found among the parents of children classified as successful readers and among parents of children classified as

unsuccessful readers.

The instruments employed to measure the selected parental attitudes and characteristics of personality were the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions and the Bernreuter Personality Inventory. The pupils included in the study were divided into Upper, Middle, and Lower Groups according to their reading grade level as measured by the Gates Primary Reading Tests. Statistical analysis was made of the differences between the scores of the parents of Upper Group children and the scores of parents of Lower Group children on the sub-tests of the Personality Inventory and the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions. Coefficients of correlation were determined by the rank-difference method to show the relationship of the attitudes and personality characteristics of the parents to the reading achievement of the children when the data were analyzed in terms of the sex of the parent and the sex of the child. Numerical tabulations were made to determine the predominant types of mother-father combinations appearing among parents of children in the Upper Group and parents of children in the Lower Group.

The major hypothesis of this study - that parental attitudes and characteristics of personality are related to the reading achievement of children - was supported by the data previously presented. In the following brief review of the findings it will be shown that this relationship is influenced by such factors as the sex of the parent, the sex of the child, and the pattern of the mother-father combinations.

REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

Parental Attitudes and Reading Achievement of Children. It is generally assumed that the child, in order to make satisfactory adaptations to school, needs some measure of independence in relationship to the authority figure and some ability to make choices for himself. The findings presented in this study indicated that there was a relationship between the parents' opinions concerning the freedom of choice to be given to children and their children's achievement in reading during the first year of school. Both the mother and the fathers of children in the Upper Group indicated by their responses on the test that children should be given more freedom of choice than was indicated by the parents of children in the Lower Group.

Relatively high positive correlations were obtained between the reading achievement of boys and opinions expressed by their fathers ($\rho=+.49$) and their mothers ($\rho=+.48$) regarding the degree of freedom of choice to be given to children. The correlations obtained between the reading achievement of girls and their mothers' and their fathers' scores on this scale were positive, but lower than those obtained for boys.

Fifty per cent of the children in the lower half of the group in reading achievement were in home situations where both parents achieved below the mean score of the total group on the scale measuring the degree of freedom of choice to be given to children. This percentage differed significantly from the percentage of the children

in the upper half who were in the same type of home situation.

Although reading readiness program in the schools have emphasized the need for active social relationships for children, the opinions of parents concerning their desire for active social relationships for children were not so highly significant in relationship to the reading achievement of the children in this study as might have been expected. This finding raises questions regarding the suitability of the instrument used for measuring the kinds of social relationships that are involved in reading readiness. However, the relatively high correlation between mothers' scores on this scale and the reading achievement of their sons ($r = +.44$) and the slightly negative correlation between the fathers' scores on this scale and the reading achievement of both their sons and their daughters were two interesting findings observed in the groups studied.

Dominance or Submission in Parents and Reading Achievement of Children. In the American culture it is generally assumed that the father in the family pattern will be the dominant parent. The findings of this study indicated that among the children achieving in the lower half of the group in reading, the fathers tended toward submissiveness in face-to-face relationships. Approximately fifty-four per cent of the children in this group were children of submissive fathers and only eight per cent were children of dominant fathers. One of the highest positive correlations obtained between any of the traits that were measured in this study and reading

achievement of children was the correlation between the scores of the fathers on the dominance-submission scale and their sons' reading achievement ($\rho = +.56$). This finding suggests the need for further investigation into the dynamics of the father-son relationship as a possible factor in the high incidence of reading failure among boys.

Self-Confidence of Parents and Reading Achievement of Children.

A child of self-confident, emotionally stable parents might be expected to be confident, capable of making decisions, unafraid of failures, and willing to learn new skills.

From the data obtained for this study, the conclusion may be drawn that feelings of inferiority on the part of parents tended in the groups studied to be associated with poor reading achievement by their children, particularly their sons, while self-confidence and general emotional stability of the parents, as measured by this scale, tended to be associated with a more adequate reading achievement on the part of children.

Sociability of Parents and Reading Achievement. The findings of this study indicated that the parents' scores on the sociability scale were only slightly related to the reading achievement of their children. It was pointed out in Chapter IV that these scores may have been influenced by the procedures used in the selection of the parents. Therefore, it would be desirable to use a larger and more diverse population in making a further study of this factor of sociability.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the major implications to be drawn from the thesis that the attitudes and personality characteristics of parents are related to the achievement of their children in reading is the need for more intensive work with parent-study groups. Schools need to be prepared to provide leadership for these groups in which parents may receive guidance in the skills and understandings necessary to the provision of satisfactory psychological climates for children in the home. This provision for parent-study groups should form an integral part of the program of instruction in reading.

One of the purposes of this study was to observe the reaction of the parent groups to the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions and the Bernreuter Personality Inventory and to evaluate these instruments as to the functions they might serve in parent-study programs. In administering these two tests to the parent groups, the investigator noted that the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions was more provocative of discussion on the part of parents than was the Personality Inventory. The cause of their difference probably lies in the nature of the questions asked: the Minnesota Scale is more objective in that the parent evaluates a relationship not necessarily his own, while the Personality Inventory is much more subjective in its questioning. For this reason, the investigator believes that the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions can be more effectively used than can the Bernreuter Personality Inventory in parent-study groups.

Another implication of this study is that more consideration should be given to what the act of becoming a reader may mean to a child. The personal significance a child may place on his becoming a reader cannot be determined by an analysis of one aspect of his total life situation. While there was evidence that submissiveness on the part of the parent tended to be associated with reading disability, there were some good readers who had submissive parents. The same situation existed in all five aspects of parental attitudes and characteristics of personality measured in this study. The complexity of the parent-child relationship is such that no single aspect of this relationship can be taken as predictive of success or failure in reading. Therefore, the findings in this study present factors that may be useful in the analysis of reading difficulty, but these should not be construed as having predictive value in individual situations. Further research is needed to determine the nature of the inter-relationships that may exist between the factors measured in this study.

A significant aspect of the relationships studied was that consistently higher correlations were obtained when analyzing the data in terms of the reading achievement of the boys than those obtained when analyzing the data in terms of the reading achievement of the girls. Within this group the fathers' attitudes and characteristics of personality were more closely associated with the reading achievement of their sons than with the reading achievement of their daughters. This difference was particularly apparent in the

areas of attitude toward freedom of choice to be given to children, characteristics of dominance or submission, and feelings of self-confidence. Likewise, the mothers' attitudes and personality characteristics were more closely associated with their sons' reading achievement than with their daughters' reading achievement. These findings suggest an area that should be a promising one for future research, using larger numbers of boys in more carefully matched groups and employing a greater variety of techniques for measurement of parental attitudes and personality characteristics.

Having found some evidence that parental attitudes are a factor to be considered in the reading achievement of children in the first grade, the investigator raises questions as to the nature of the relationships that exist between these affective factors and the reading achievement of children at higher age and grade levels. Does the relationship between parental attitudes and personality characteristics and the achievement of children become more pronounced at higher levels? Does this relationship become more or less significant for the boy as he progresses through school? Such questions as these could well serve as the basis for future research in this area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, M., and Mae Kelley, "An Inquiry Into Traits Associated with Reading Disability," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 2:46-63, 1931.
- Allport, Gordon W., "Attitudes," Handbook of Social Psychology, Carl Marchison, editor, Chap. XVII, 1935.
- Axline, Virginia Mae, "Treatment of Emotional Problems of Poor Readers by Nondirective Therapy," Clinical Studies in Reading, 1:141-51, June, 1949.
- Beck, Harriet K., "Relationship of Emotional Factors in Early Childhood to Subsequent Growth and to Achievement in Reading," Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1950. 191 pp.
- Bernreuter, Robert C., The Personality Inventory. Stanford, California: The Stanford University Press, 1935.
- Blake, Robert R. and Glenn Hansey, Perception: An Approach to Personality. New York: The Ronald Press, 1951. Chap. VIII.
- Buros, Oscar K., editor, The Fourth Mental Measurements Yearbook. Highland Park, N.J.: The Gryphon Press, 1935. 135-40 pp.
- Flanagan, J. C., Factor Analysis in the Study of Personality. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1935. 103 pp.
- Gates, Arthur I., Gates Primary Reading Tests. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943.
- Graham, Earl E., "An Exploration of a Theory of the Emotional Bases for Reading Failure," Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Denver, 1951. 157 pp.
- Gray, W. S., "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Walter S. Monroe, editor, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950. pp. 965-66
- Gray, W. S., and others, "Reading," Review of Educational Research, 7:493-507, December, 1939.
- Hincks, Elizabeth M., Disability in Reading and Its Relation to Personality. Harvard Monographs in Education, No. 7. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926. 92 pp.
- Knight, Elva E., "Personality Development Through Reading," The Reading Teacher, 7:21-28, October, 1938.

- Kunst, Mary S., "Psychological Treatment in Reading Disability," Clinical Studies in Reading, 1:133-40.
- Ladd, Margaret Rhoads, The Relation of Social, Economic, and Personal Characteristics to Reading Ability. Contributions to Education, number 582. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933. 100 pp.
- Lowes, Ruth Violet, "The Relation of Certain Home Factors to Pupils' Readiness for Reading and Progress in Grade I." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1948. 151 pp.
- Miles, Katherine A., "The Relationship of Certain Factors in the Home Background and the Qualities of Leadership Shown by Children." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1945. 245 pp.
- Memorandum on the Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions. Preliminary Statement issued by the Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, December, 1951.
- Minnesota Scale of Parents' Opinions. Minneapolis: Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota.
- Milner, Esther, "A Study of the Relationship between Reading Readiness in Grade One School Children and Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction," Child Development, 22 : 95-112, June, 1951.
- Murfin, Mark, "A Study of the Expressed Attitudes of Children from Two Socio-Economic Levels and the Relationship to Intelligence and Reading Achievement." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1952. 218 pp.
- Prescott, Daniel A., Emotion and the Educative Process. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1938. 328 pp.
- Robinson, Helen M., Why Pupils Fail in Reading. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946. 257 pp.
- Sheldon, W. D. and Lawrence Carillo, "Relation of Parents, Home, and Certain Developmental Characteristics to Children's Reading Ability," Elementary School Journal, 52:262-70, January, 1952.
- Siegel, Max, "The Personality Structures of Children with Reading Disabilities as Compared with Children Presenting Other Clinical Problems." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, New York University, New York City, 1951. 205 pp.

Stewart, Robert S., "Personality Maladjustment and Reading Achievement," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 20:410-17, April, 1950.

Sullivan, Elizabeth T., Willis W. Clark, and Ernest W. Tiegs, California Test of Mental Maturity (Primary). Los Angeles: California Test Bureau, 1951.

Symonds, Percival W., The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949. 197 pp.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Verna Louise Vickery was born in Andalusia, Alabama, on September 23, 1917, and was educated in the public schools of that city. She was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education by the University of Missouri in 1940 and the degree of Master of Science in Education by Drake University in 1949. During the 1949-50 school year, she was a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Educational Psychology at New York University and initiated her doctoral studies there.

She began her teaching career in 1937 in the elementary schools of Covington County, Alabama. In 1942, she entered the field of secondary education and taught for the next two years in the Cullman County and Choctaw County (Alabama) systems. From 1943-48, she was a teacher at Southern Institute in Camp Hill, Alabama, a private secondary school established primarily to assist adolescents in their problems of social adjustment. In 1948-49, she taught reading at Lincoln High School in Des Moines, Iowa. For three summers, she was Co-Director of the Reading Clinic at Drake University and was an instructor in the School of Education there during the 1950-51 term. She was Co-Director of the Reading Clinic at Memphis State College during the summers of 1951 and 1952 and was a Visiting Instructor there in 1952. She is, at present, employed as Reading Consultant on the staff of the Special Education Clinic at Southeastern Louisiana College in Hammond.

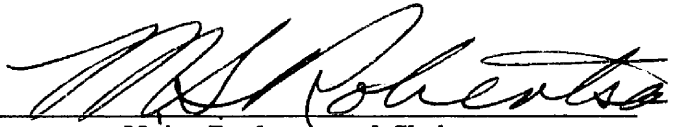
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

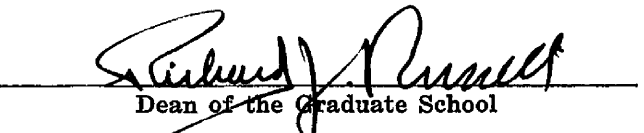
Candidate: **Verna Vickery**

Major Field: **Education**

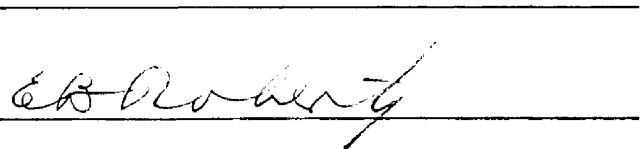
Title of Thesis: **A Study of the Relationship of Certain Parental Attitudes and Personality Characteristics to the Reading Achievement of Children in the First Grade**

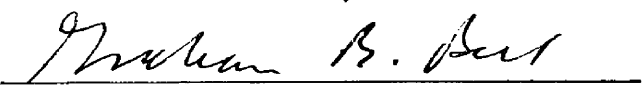
Approved:



Major Professor and Chairman

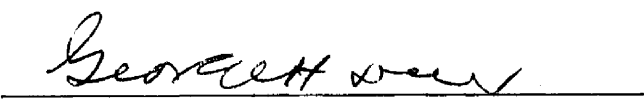

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Date of Examination:

July 15, 1954